

on the COVER



District scientists use airboats to access remote research and monitoring sites.

Information is verified before it is entered into a computer database.

Kissimmee Field Station employees load and store aquatic plant management chemicals.

A student intern checks a spring balance, used for taking measurements in the field.

A pump station operator adjusts the engine controls inside G-310.

These Boots Are Made for Workin'



"I hadn't even started the physical work yet, and I already had a deeper appreciation for the level of detail and expertise it takes to maintain District facilities."

— IRELA BAGUÉ
GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER

Governing Board member Irela Bagué traded in her office attire to spend a day in the trenches with a crew from the District's Homestead Field Station. She plans to devote similar time working alongside other agency staff from time to time as they go about the business of protecting and restoring southern Florida's water resources.

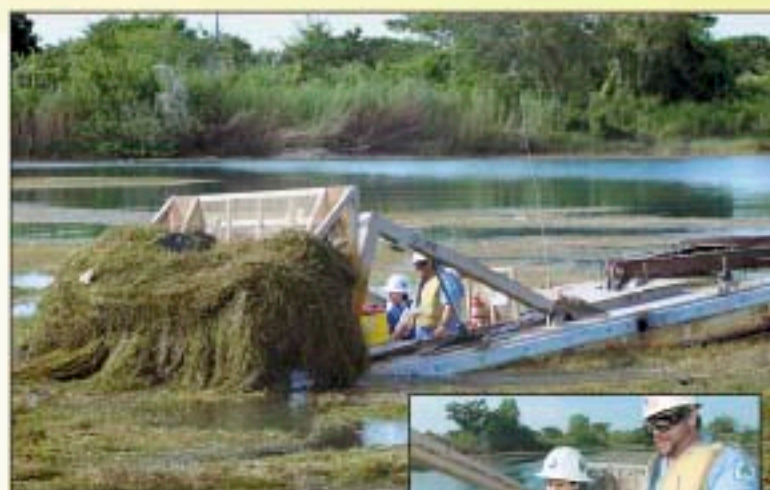
I made sure I was on time — I'd be even better. I know the field crews work on a pretty rigid schedule, and they depend on the entire unit being fully prepped and ready to roll first thing in the morning. After some strong coffee and small chit-chat, it was down to business.

Since I volunteered to be an operations and maintenance worker for the day, the first order was to get me outfitted and trained.



In her role as a field station crew member for the day, Irela Bagué operates the hydraulic boom on a "trash truck."

Hard hat, gloves (brought my own work boots, thank you) and protective goggles. Safety is always a priority, so they were not about to let me operate any



Governing Board Member Irela Bagué receives on-the-job training, then gets to work clearing a Miami-Dade canal of nuisance vegetation.



equipment without proper training and full understanding of the machinery's capability. I hadn't even started the physical work yet, and I already had a deeper appreciation for the level of detail and expertise it takes to maintain District facilities.

First up, they put me in a life vest and plopped me behind the controls of a tow boat. These vessels ride low in the water and have front-operated baskets that collect and remove debris and vegetation from canals. After a few stilted and jerky practice movements, I quickly got the hang of it and was soon scooping up and dumping trash

onto the canal banks. My next job was to help dispose of the unwanted material placed on the canal banks. This time I operated the hydraulic boom on a

"trash truck" — mechanically picking up and placing the debris onto a 45-foot trailer. To round out my work duties, I helped conduct preventive maintenance procedures at S-20F, a District water-control structure.

Later in the day, I switched from my hard hat to my Governing Board member hat and met with an agricultural business-owner in the Homestead area.

It was a tough, but rewarding, day. Why did I do it? Because I think it is vital for everyone to understand the importance of the water management system throughout central and southern Florida — how the canals, levees, storage areas and structures work to protect us, and how District staff work to ensure that these facilities are always in peak condition.

As a Governing Board member, these hands-on, in-the-field experiences give me the broader perspective I need in order to make critical policy decisions and to provide overall agency direction. My boots are well broken-in, and I look forward to working with other field crews during my four-year tenure on the Board.

UPDATE

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral argument in the case **South Florida Water Management District vs. Miccosukee Tribe and Friends of the Everglades (S-9)** January 14, 2004. For the latest news and frequently asked questions about the case, visit the District's S-9 web site at www.sfwmd.gov/gover/s_9final/home/



Storing Water to Protect Lagoon and Estuary Ten Mile Creek Project

Leaders of local, state and federal government gathered November 7 in Fort Pierce to celebrate the start of the Ten Mile Creek Water Preserve Area Project. It is a critical part of Everglades restoration designed to improve water quality and environmental values in the St. Lucie Estuary and the Indian River Lagoon. The District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosted the groundbreaking ceremony. Estimated construction completion is December 2005.

Above: Groundbreaking participants include (left to right) Lennart E. Lindahl, District Governing Board member; Michael Minton, former District Governing Board member; Col. Robert Carpenter, Jacksonville District Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; John Paul Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; Richard Pettigrew, Chair, Anadabon of Florida; David Strubbs, Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; and Cliff Barnes, Chair, St. Lucie County Commission.

Right: The Ten Mile Creek Project will store and treat water, moderate flow to the St. Lucie Estuary and provide wildlife habitat.

